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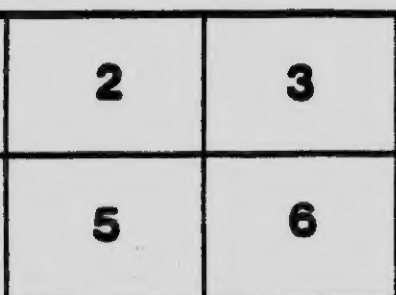
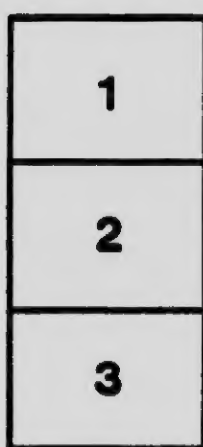
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MEMORIES OF HALLOWE'EN

At the annual banquet of the Caledonian Society of Toronto, on Hallowe'en, 1906, the toast to "The Day and a' wha honor it," was proposed by the President, George Kennedy, LL.D., and responded to by J. A. Macdonald, Managing Editor of THE GLOBE.

TORONTO
1906

GT 4965

M33

Memories of Hallowe'en

A RESPONSE

Mr. President and Gentlemen,—In the name of all who honor this day, I thank you for the cordial way in which you have honored this toast.

But, sir, when you introduce me as "a Highlander" and I am called upon to respond for "the day and a' wha honor it," I feel myself something of an impostor. In a gathering such as this, where every man's speech betrays his birthplace, where every salutation and song and story smacks of the heathery hills, and where memories are awakened that go back to the wind-swept moor and the rainy seas—in a gathering such as this and responding to this toast I feel as an intruder and as one who plays the part of some other man.

I am constrained to confess, sir, that, whatever distinction may belong to Scottish birth, and whatever inspiration may come from Scottish memories, I must content myself among those whose proudest boast is in being native-born Canadian. Neither my father nor my grandfather ever saw the brown heath and shaggy wood. It is therefore a far call for me; and even on an occasion such as this the best

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I can say is that a red Grant from the Spey district, whose grave is in Cape Breton, was my great-grandfather on one side, and that the Macdonald Mohr of the 84th Highlanders who fought in the American revolutionary war, and settled in the East River of Pictou in 1778, and fifty years after moved to Upper Canada in time for the Mackenzie rebellion, was my great-grandfather on the other side. That far cry through four generations is the best I can do in my claim to be a Caledonian.

But, sir, though these generations intervene, though my early associations are not with the lochs and glens, though I never heard the pibroch among the hills or saw the kilted clans go out to war, I give place to no man among you, not to the oldest or to the last come, in that appreciation of Scottish worth, and that regard for Scottish heroism, and that devotion to Scottish ideals which give reason and purpose to such societies as this, whose guest I have the honor to be to-night. For, sir, the men and the women who bridge the century and more between us and the land of the heather neither forswore their Highland clans nor forgot their Highland tongue nor denied their Highland faith. And so, sir, over against all those handicaps and hindrances which

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you think inseparable from birth and boyhood beside other streams and under other skies, I set this as a not unworthy claim that, despite the hundred and thirty years of Canadian life, the blood of the Cameron of Lédhie and of the Grant of Craig Ellichie and of the Macdonald Mohr himself that mingles in my veins is to this day untouched and untainted by any Lowland or Sassenach or alien blood of any kind.

I know, sir, that all this has nothing to do with the toast to which I am charged to respond, except as some apology or defence for those who are responsible for my place upon the list to-night. And now for the toast: "The Day and a' wha honor it."

I am no authority on days and times and seasons, and the significance of Halloween to me may be entirely different from what it is to you. My thought goes back to the place and the days when for me Halloween was a great night. It was not in Scotland, or in Nova Scotia, but up in that district of Middlesex county known as East Williams, and in that Garden of Eden between McPherson's Church and Cruickshank's Bridge, through which that classical stream, the Sauble, flows. You may not have seen that noble river, sir, and if so life has still some object for you. Where it takes its rise no man

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may know and the issue of its waters I may not tell, but there is a stretch of that stream that is as finely haunted as any river that ever found its way to the sea. From some mystery land up about Nairn and Ailsa Craig it came wandering down by the old Brick Church and James Gray's Bridge and through the dark woods of the Wyatts and out into the sunlight by McLean's mill and across Waters' side-road and round McKean's Point and away past the Big Gully and on to "Lewey's" Bridge and out into that other unknown land of West Williams, where dwelt Big John McLeish and the McLachlans and the Big McNeils.

Well, sir, up in that country the people celebrated Halloween, as they did all things else, after their own way. Who were the people? Their names have been heard elsewhere and might be recognized as not quite unfamiliar in a Caledonian Society. On the banks of the majestic Sauble were men with large farms and large families, and they bore the names of Ross, and Fraser, and McKenzie, and Stewart, and McTaggart, and McCallum, and McQueen, and Campbell, and McLean, and Waters, and McKean and McLeish, and Macdonald, and McIntosh, and McGregor. And those on the river were backed up on the Tenth Concession and on the Centre Road and on

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Glasgow Street by men like Munro, and McKay, and McPherson, and McKinnon, and McKillop, and Matheson, and Buchanan, and Harvey, and Galbraith, and Cruickshank, and more McGregors, and more McLeishs, and McCubbin, and more Campbells, and still more Macdonalds.

Now, sir, in that country and to its people Halloween may have had a meaning and a purpose strange to you and to the members of this society. I recall the gatherings in the evening in the Big Room where the older neighbors came for a "ceilidh" and the younger ones for a lark. I can hear the old songs now. I mind, too, how the apple-peeling was swung three times round the head to divine the name of one's sweetheart, and the duck for the apple in the water tub, and the songs and stories and games, and then the awful horror when at the window there suddenly appeared a hideous face so big, with teeth so monstrous, and eyes of flame that looked you through and through, and froze the marrow in your bones. Nor do I forget the adventures out-of-doors—the bogies and spooks and eerie things that came up from the gullies and made noises no mortal ever cares to hear. Then, too, there were the raids. They were greatest and wildest of all. There were no Sassenachs there, and very few Lowlanders, whose belongings might be

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"lifted" with satisfaction; and so it came that the clans were sometimes under necessity to raid one another.

You must not think that because we were

*Far from the hills of heather,
Far from the isles of the sea,*

there was no keenness and no enthusiasm in these raids. Old feuds die hard, and among the Speieich and Ileich and Uidhistich and Sgiathanaich and Aireghaidhealaich and a Blue Nose or two, there was the spirit that gave zest to every raid. And so the turnip-field and the cabbage-patch were not forgotten; the gates were transferred to the apple-trees, the grindstone was hung in the well, the fanning-mill was made fast on the peak of the barn, the kitchen chimney was choked with sods, and one wheel of the waggon was rolled two miles down the river.

Those, sir, are some of the memories that come back to me when you talk of Halloween, and if such reminiscences were in your minds when you, gentlemen, honored this toast with such lusty loyalty, then I thank you on behalf of all to whom such memories are dear. For, sir, such recollections are no vain and flickering illusions of the brain. It is by such things men live, and in the thoughts which such memories stir is

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the strength and the beauty of our maturer years

I thank you, then, for your honoring of Halloween, because it stands for those old associations. Who among us has not proved the worth and the recreative power of the ties which bind us to those simpler scenes of life? It is to such scenes and to the life they expressed and enshrine that we return with quickest eagerness when the stress and burden of the work-day world is hard upon us and when the make-believes and conventionalities of society would rob us of our individuality and self-respect. It matters not what the setting of those scenes, what the geography of that life, what river wanders through it or what names make its memory sacred. Every true man has his own hallowed sanctuary of long ago—

Each heart recalled a different name,

But all sang "Annie Laurie."

For the places made sacred by old association are not so much points on the map as passions in the heart, and of all men who live the men of Scottish blood must keep tender and true their memories of youth and native land. Good indeed is it for any man—his bow will abide in strength and the pillars of his house will not fall—if, when the Philistines of his life are upon him, he can

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retire into the sequestered and enchanted nooks of years long past and live again the simple, wholesome, care-free days, and drink again from those springs of life that slander never polluted, and breathe again the caller air from hills made high and holy by childhood's fancy and youth's fond dream.

Halloween is sacred to the memory of home and native land. I would have you, Mr. President, and these Caledonians in Canada, and myself, a Canadian native-born, think seriously of how much such heart memories have meant to the men of our kith and kin who in these centuries of Scottish history have fought the battles and borne the burdens and guarded the honor and faced the sorrows and made great the name of their native land. Instances of what I mean might be gathered from every shire and every clan of Scotland. Let me cite one instance, recorded by Ruskin, touching the Clan Grant, to which I already referred.

The home of the Grants on the Speyside was one of the barest and loneliest of a bare and lonely land. Their peat cottages were the blackest, their lot was the hardest, and the life they lived had little of the glory and greatness that belong to those master clans of the north and the west. But in the heart of their little land, at a turn of

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the winding Grampian road, there stood a broken, jagged, pine-topped rock, "Craig Ellachie," and the men that lived their little life around that broken crag had this as the battle-cry of their clan: "Stand fast, Craig Ellachie." That rude spot was to those red Grants the shrine of the honor of their clan; and wherever the awful fortunes of war drove them—amid the marble palaces of mutinous India, at the Crimea, in the Peninsula, at Waterloo, up the Nile, and farther still from "the land of the naked knee"—those clansmen who stood for Britain's Imperialism stood first for Scotland's honor; and if ever the shock of battle made any heart faint, and if ever the face of death made any soul draw back, there came to them that message from the home land and that challenge from their own rock-fast hearth: "Stand fast, Craig Ellachie!" And they stood.

And, sir, what that home life and those home associations were to the clansmen in their home land, other crags and other streams were to their children's children in the new world. At this moment there come back to me the glowing stories I heard in early years about the glories and the greatness of Pictou county and the East River and McLellan's Mountain. You talk of the Spey and the Dee and the

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Doon and the Clyde. To me they were as nothing when compared with the rivers of Pictou and the South River of Antigonish. And when, two years ago, I stood for the first time on McLellan's Mountain, I felt the ground was holy ground, and Jordan and Esdraelon were poor and mean and forgotten when I looked across that valley of my forefathers to Pictou Harbor and the Strait. The Macdonalds and the Grants who left that valley in the hard years of the 'thirties and the 'forties, and founded new homes in the forest wilds of Middlesex and Huron and Grey, carried with them memories as sacred and inspirations as fine as ever stirred their forefathers.

In the land of the heathery hills.

In the days of the feud and the fight.

And so, sir, what the rivers of Scotland were to the men of the clans, what the rivers of Pictou were to their sons, that the Sauble was and is to me. And that, too, some other river, and some other hill, and some other life is to every man of you who has not for some poor mess of pottage sold his Scottish birthright. In that hallowed ground the roots of our lives go down and take fast hold. The hills on whose sides we played, and the rivers that sang their murmuring songs to our youth, and the schools and churches by the roadside, are

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nearer and dearer to us than all the wealth and splendor of the Babylon in which we serve. The challenge of that old life comes to us as it came to the clansmen, and by the truth and the honor and the faith that once were ours we are charged to stand fast in the thickest of the fight, lest we be untrue to the place that gave us birth.

I have spoken of the significance of this day as recalling the incidents and the life of youth and native place. The day has a deeper meaning and a sacred reference. Halloween is the eve of All Saints' Day, and is sacred to the memory of the great and the dead. What a wealth, what a flood-tide of noble thoughts and high emotions come back when, on such a night as this, one lets imagination play and lets memory call up from the glowing page of Scottish history the splendid procession of heroes and mighty men, of warriors and leaders, of bards and singers, of philosophers and teachers and prophets, of men of science and men of art and men of literature, of martyrs and missionaries and statesmen—that splendid procession from Wallace and Bruce and Knox down to the latest martyrs of the Church and the heroes of Magersfontein and the pioneers of the Greater Britain at the ends of the earth. To the names and the

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deeds of those men we do honor to-night. And well we may, for to their faith and heroism, not Scotland alone, but Britain and America and the world owe a debt that never can be paid.

One word more and I have done. To you men of this big land and eager age I make a plea for the sentiment of life. It was the finer sentiment, the poetry, the delicate atmosphere of life, that made those moors and hills of your fathers' native land so dear to them and to you. The fields were not fertile nor the life easy and rich, but round about the commonest things there gathered those finer fancies that made for patriotism and devotion. See you to it that the rush for wealth and the boasts of mere bigness do not kill for you and for your children that love for Canada and devotion to Canadian honor without which this country never can be great.

If Scotamen loved their land and were loyal to their chiefs, giving for its sake their lives—"another for Hector"—surely we—you and I and all of us—are under obligation to Canada to make this half-continent a land of great men and noble deeds. And if they were ready to stand to the last for their great causes even though they were lost causes, if, as the singer sang so stirringly a while ago, those leal-hearted men who followed 'Bonnie Charlie,' hunted and harried

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among the hills were uncorrupt and defiant for honor's sake—

English bribes were a' in vain,
An' e'en tho' puirer we may be,
Siller canna buy the heart
That beats aye for thine and thee.

We watch'd thee in the gloamin' hour,
We watch'd thee in the mornin' gray;
Tho' thirty thousand pounds they'd gie,
Oh! there is nane that wad betray—

surely it would be shame for us, their sons, to choose our own ease, or our own gain, or to sell ourselves for paltry bribes when the great and triumphant cause of Canadian nationhood is calling for our aid. By our fidelity to truth and honor for Canada's sake we preserve Scotland's best heritage for those who follow after and prove ourselves not unworthy of those who have gone before.



